

Chapter Seven

Defending Zion's Borders: The Utah War

Brigham Young and most of his counsellors were at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon on July 24th, 1857 when Porter Rockwell brought the report that President Buchanan had ordered General William Selby Harney and the United States Army's 5th and 10th Infantrys into Utah. As Governor of the territory Brigham Young had received no official notification of the armies dispatch, or of its intent, therefore in accordance with his authority as Governor he issued a proclamation placing the territory under martial law. The proclamation stated that Brigham Young was the legal Governor, not having been replaced by the President, therefore by virtue of his authority he forbid all armed forces from entering the territory under any pretense, and ordered all of the territorial milita, the Nauvoo Legion, to hold themselves in readiness at a moment's notice to repel any and all invasions.⁽¹⁾

Governor Young had every reason to take the actions he did, for reports and rumors emanating from Washington and the eastern press did not bode well for the Mormons. When General Harney was ordered into Utah, he was quoted as saying, "I will capture Brigham Young and the twelve apostles and execute them in a summary manner

and then I will winter in the temple of the Latter Day Saints!"⁽²⁾ There is some doubt that General Harney made such a statement, for the Mormon Temple was little more than a pile of building stone at that time, nevertheless it appeared that Brigham Young and his people had cause for concern. Governor Young quickly dispatched Samuel Richards to Washington to inform President Buchanan that the army would not be allowed into the territory, and that by law he was required by oath to protect the territory from any invasion by an armed mob which was not coming for any lawful purpose.

As Governor, Brigham Young left no doubt that he meant what he said, and a speech he made was widely quoted by the eastern press, gaining the Saints the sympathy of many in congress. "Rather than see my wives and daughters ravished and polluted, and the seeds of corruption sown in the hearts of my sons by a brutal soldiery, I would leave my home in ashes, my garden and orchard a waste, and subsist upon roots and herbs, a wanderer through these mountains for the remainder of my life!"⁽³⁾ He was even more critical of President Buchanan personally when he prophesied, "For his outrageous wickedness, he shall wear the yoke as long as he lives, he shall be led about by his party with the yoke on his neck, and his name shall be forgotten!"⁽⁴⁾ There can be little doubt that his prophecy came true, for President Buchanan is probably the least remembered or respected of all presidents, remembered if at all only for the grave mistake of sending the United States Army against its own people, an error which would always be recalled in history as "Buchanan's Blunder".

The twisted trail of events leading up to the ill-planned Utah War was a long and devious one, starting with the persecutions in Ohio, Missouri and Illinois and culminating in the murder of Joseph Smith. After their exodus into the wilderness and subsequent flight to Utah Territory, the Saint's most provocative problems stemmed from their probate courts and the practice of polygamy. After Judge William Drummond was appointed as Federal Judge of the new territory, he learned that nearly all legal matters were resolved by Mormon probate courts, while he was virtually ignored. In reality, there were very few legal cases requiring a federal court's attention, most matters being simple disputes between neighbors concerning water rights or land boundaries.

Judge Drummond was also held in contempt because he was a drunkard and lived with a woman not his wife. The noted historian Hubert Howe Bancroft called Drummond "A gambler and a bully" who came to Utah only to make money, openly stating "Money is my God!" Judge Drummond finally resigned his office, but in doing so, on March 30th, 1857 he wrote to his close friend, President Buchanan, that Brigham Young had destroyed court records and ordered that travelers in Utah be murdered. He claimed that 300 murders had been committed in only six months, yet no one had been prosecuted or sent to prison. He alleged that he had been forced to flee the territory, barely escaping with his life, and told the President that all Mormons were treacherous to the core and in a state of armed rebellion against the government. (5)

The practice of polygamy excited even stronger feelings against the Mormon people. Although there was no law, either federal or territorial prohibiting the practice, Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois campaigned vocally against it during his presidential campaign of 1856, proclaiming to all that "slavery and polygamy were the twin relics of barbarism". Armed with Judge Drummond's false accusations and at the urging of Senator Douglas, on May 27th, 1857 President Buchanan secretly ordered General Harney to march against the Mormons, ignoring completely the fact that only the congress had the authority to declare war. He acted upon Judge Drummond's report without making any inquiry or investigation to ascertain whether it was true or not. It proved to be a mistake which destroyed his political career, for he grossly under-estimated Brigham Young's ability as a leader and tactician, or the American people's sense of fairness and their revulsion at his high-handed and illegal act of war.

When President Buchanan ordered General Harney to winter in the Salt Lake Valley and to resolve the "Mormon problem" once and for all, General Harney replied, "I will winter in the Salt Lake Valley or I will winter in hell!"⁽⁶⁾ But secretly General Harney apparently had no real desire to lead a campaign against the Mormons and also questioned the wisdom of outfitting for a Rocky Mountain expedition on such short notice so late in the season. Logistics of so great an undertaking were staggering. It took nearly two months just to outfit and ready 2,484 troops from the 5th and 10th Infantries, with at least that many more civilian scouts, teamsters,

traders and agents. From Ft. Leavenworth in Kansas, General Harney had to recall most of the 5th Infantry by a forced march from Florida. More than 200 enlisted men deserted along the way rather than face the coming winter in the Rockies, and several officers resigned their commissions rather than be sent to fight their fellow citizens. Still, President Buchanan was successful in keeping his army a secret from the press and the congress until it started the march west from Ft. Leavenworth.

The army started west on July 18th, 1857 and although it was to move in secrecy, almost immediately its movement became known, for the troops were seen by Mormon express rider Abraham Smoot, who quickly informed Porter Rockwell and Judson Stoddard, two couriers who were carrying the eastern mail from Utah. Immediately all three made a forced 500 mile ride from Ft. Laramie to Salt Lake City where they reported to Brigham Young at Silver Lake on July 24th.

Ironically, it was exactly ten years to the day since Brigham Young had entered the Great Salt Lake Valley and said, "This is the place!" At that time, recalling Joseph Smith's prophecy that the "Saints would remove to the Rocky Mountains where even the devil cannot dig us out",⁽⁷⁾ Young had said, "Give us ten years and we will ask no quarter of our enemies."⁽⁸⁾ Now ten years had passed and once more the Saints were facing extermination at the hands of their enemies. But this time the Saints were secure in the Rocky Mountains, while the army had to be supplied by a long, thin supply line which stretched out across a thousand miles of mountains, desert and prairie. The odds were not so one-sided anymore. And while the



Joseph Stacy Murdock
Taken at the time of the Utah War
Courtesy: Mrs. A.T. Witt, SL City

army was marching westward, Brigham Young was busy readying the defense of Zion.

Once more the Mormon people were united in a common effort to defend themselves. Old men volunteered to serve in the Nauvoo Legion to fight "Old Squaw Killer" Harney, who had earned his hated nickname when he led an army which massacred an entire village of Sioux Indians in May, 1855. Young Mormon boys ran through the city streets singing, "Old Squaw Killer Harney is on his way, He says the Mormons for to slay, Now if he comes, the truth I'll tell, Our boys will drive him down to hell!"⁽⁹⁾

On October 10th, 1857 the Nauvoo Legion under command of Col. Robert Burton marched out of Salt Lake City heading for Echo Canyon, 1,200 men strong. The Mormon Militia was dubbed "The Eastern Expedition", and both Joseph and Nymphus Murdock were numbered among its ranks. And among his friends of earlier days who went to war with him were Ephraim Hanks, Daniel Jones, Thomas Rasband, Bill Hickman and John Crook. Their Commanding Officer was Col. William Pace, in charge of the regiment from Utah County. Daniel Jones was placed in charge of a company stationed at Lost Springs near the head of Echo Canyon, and Joseph was one of those stationed there.⁽¹⁰⁾

The Nauvoo Legion was prepared to fight if necessary, remembering Brigham Young's words to Capt. James Van Vliet, who had entered the valley as an army emissary during September to ask for supplies and to seek a suitable base for an army camp. Young told him, "If the army plans a base camp in the Vale Of Zion, they will have to fight for it!"⁽¹¹⁾ Joseph and his fellow soldiers were busy digging rifle

pits at strategic locations and building rock wall fortifications along the tops of the vertical cliffs.

The Nauvoo Legion had only a few old mountain howitzers and small field cannons, therefore those stationed at Lost Springs devised a clever stratagem to deceive General Harney's scouts. They cut a number of small, straight lodgepole pines and stripped the bark from them, cutting all branches flush with the trunk and then polishing the remaining round log to make it completely smooth. They used soot and oil to dye the wood black and then mounted the blackened logs between wagon wheels along the canyon rim so that anyone seeing them from a distance or looking up at them from the canyon below would believe they were cannons. Their ruse later proved to be very successful at fooling the armies scouts.

General Daniel Wells of the Nauvoo Legion emphasized Brigham Young's order to avoid bloodshed at all costs when he instructed his men, "Annoy the army troops in every way possible, stampede their animals and set fire to their wagon trains. Keep them from sleeping at night, block the roads and destroy river fords where you can. Keep scouts out at all times and advise me of every step the troops take, and in which direction. Take no life, but destroy their trains and drive away their animals at every opportunity." (12)

Joseph and the other militamen at Echo Canyon had learned mountain warfare the hard way, fighting Utes during the Walker War in Utah Valley and being in the middle of the fighting between Piutes and miners at the Carson Mission. Men like Bill Hickman, Ephraim Hanks and Lot Smith were skilled fighters, easily capable of sneaking

through enemy lines or past sentries to creep up close to officer's tents where they could listen to plans being discussed. On one occasion Hanks lay listening in the shadows so close that table scraps were thrown on him! (13)

Lot Smith led a select band of guerilla fighters who could outfox even an Indian. With only a handful of men he burned the prairie for miles ahead and to both sides of the army, so that there was no grass for their livestock to forage on. His men set wagons afire and stampeded countless horses and mules, attacking during the dark of night as silently as Indians, denying the soldiers sleep or rest and completely demoralizing them. On October 3rd, 1857 Smith burned one army train of 52 wagons at Simpson's Hollow on the Green River and then burned a second train of 25 wagons a few nights later, destroying hundreds of tons of munitions and army supplies. (14) A herd of 500 mules was stampeded and stolen in one bunch on November 5th, while in only a few weeks Smith's men drove more than 1,000 head of horses and mules into Salt Lake Valley.

Col. Henry Inman reported that on October 11th the Nauvoo Legion captured a herd of 700 oxen and mules from the army and two weeks later drove off still another 500 head, leaving the army virtually stranded on the plains. (15) In a daring daylight raid, with only a few men dressed in homespun and ragged clothes and armed with every kind of rifle and pistol available, Smith surprised an army patrol led by Capt. Dawson. The Mormons disarmed the soldiers and prepared to burn their wagons. Capt. Dawson pleaded, "For God's sake, don't burn the wagons!", and Smith replied, "It is for his sake that I am

going to burn them!" And he did! (16)

Winter was fast approaching and the army was stranded on the barren, windswept plains of Wyoming. General Harney, who had vowed to winter in the Salt Lake Valley, was relieved of command in disgrace on August 29th, 1857 and was replaced by General Albert Sidney Johnston. From the Mormon's point of view, President Buchanan couldn't have made a worse choice, for Johnston was an almost fanatical Mormon hater who vowed to spare no effort to put the "unruly Mormons" in their place. Fortunately for the sake of both the army troops and the Nauvoo Legion, winter was hard upon the land before General Johnston reached the mountains. Johnston found his command demoralized and half frozen, with many suffering from frostbite. They were too short of supplies to face a winter in the mountains, but they were unable to retreat all the way back to safety at Ft. Leavenworth. General Johnston was forced to make a painful decision that was bitter as gall to him. He would have to make a forced march to Ft. Bridger and spent winter in the mountains.

Beginning on November 6th, 1857, through deep snow and below zero temperatures, General Johnston urged, harried and forced his sick and frozen troops towards Ft. Bridger. It took his starving, crippled men 15 days to go only 35 miles, in 16 degree below zero weather. On November 8th the temperature dropped to 44 degrees below zero! But General Johnston's hope of a safe refuge went up in smoke before his very eyes, for Lot Smith had anticipated his desperate gamble and burned the fort only days before his arrival! General Johnston found only smoking rubble. He was furious and frustrated,

but he was learning first hand what General Harney had learned before him. Mormons didn't fight the way soldiers were taught to do at West Point! He had no choice other than make the best winter camp he could in the ruins of the burned fort. At least ten of his soldiers deserted and made their way across the mountains to Salt Lake City, where they told a harrowing tale of the hardships the army was suffering in the mountains.

On November 24th, 1857 General Johnston dispatched his Chief of Scouts, Mountain Man Jim Baker with Capt. Randolph Marcy and 40 soldiers and 24 civilian packers with 66 mules on a desperate mission to Ft. Union in far away New Mexico to find supplies for his stranded troops. But Baker and his party became stranded in the mountains themselves and never reached Ft. Union until January 21st, 1858. Most of his men were sick and many of his mules had been frozen along the way. It took Baker six weeks to find the necessary supplies and on his return trip he lost 12 men and 100 mules, all frozen to death in the Colorado mountains. The remainder of his party never reached Ft. Bridger until June, 1858, far too late to help General Johnston and his army.

When he first saw the deplorable condition of his army, General Johnston sent a secret dispatch to Washington, pleading for reinforcements. During the winter reinforcements under command of Col. Philip St. George Cooke arrived, but they only compounded Johnston's problems, for many of Col. Cooke's men were frostbitten and two-thirds of his animals had died along the way, leaving a trail across the prairie lined with dead livestock and abandoned equipment. In his memoirs

Col. Cooke recalled, "I started with 144 horses and have lost 134 of them. The earth has no more lifeless, grassless desert. It contains scarcely a wolf to glut itself on the hundreds of dead and frozen animals which block the road with abandoned and shattered property. They mark beyond example in history the steps of an advancing army with the horror of a disastrous retreat."⁽¹⁷⁾

General Johnston sent an urgent dispatch to President Buchanan reporting that the army was winning every battle and that he expected to march into Salt Lake City in early spring, but that more supplies and reenforcements were desperately needed. President Buchanan, by then ridiculed by the congress and the subject of scorn and abuse by the eastern press, is said to have replied to Johnston that if he continued winning every battle the way he was, the army would soon be wiped out!

President Buchanan ordered the already defeated General Harney back into the field, with an army of 3,018 regulars made up of troops from Ft. Leavenworth and the 2nd Dragoons and the 6th Infantry from Ft. Laramie. They were backed by 5,000 teamsters, 4,500 wagons, 4,000 mules and 5,000 oxen. The addition of Harney's troops made a total of more than 5,600 regular army troops assigned to the "Utah Expedition", with almost twice that number of civilian scouts and teamsters. With the added cost of supplies and equipment, the Utah War had cost the taxpayers nearly \$15,000,000 at a time when it could least be spared or afforded.

Historian Bancroft wrote, "No expedition ever dispatched by the United States was better equipped and provisioned than was the Army

of Utah." (18) And Alexander Majors, one of the chief contractors hauling supplies to Utah recorded, "The supplies sent to Utah were enormous, exceeding 8,000 tons. The loss to the army was at least 500,000 pounds of vital supplies. My company alone had 400 wagons on the road and later increased that number to 3,500 wagons and 40,000 oxen, requiring the employment of 4,000 men." (19) No better equipped army ever started on a campaign or became bogged down so quickly in total defeat. The American people were irate, congress was furious and there was talk in Washington of impeachment action against the President.

With the mountain passes closed by deep snow, only a handful of men were kept on duty to guard Echo Canyon. Joseph was one of those allowed to return to his home, where he started putting his disrupted life back together again. It was a hard time for Joseph and his family. He had lost his "Inheritance In Zion" home at Salt Lake City as well as his little house at Church Pastures when he was called to settle Carson Valley. Then he had to sacrifice everything at Carson when he was called back to Utah to fight Johnston's Army. At age 36 he had to start all over again, little better off than he had been when he first saw the promised valley 11 years before. He still had Eunice's home at American Fork and his little cabin at White's Fort, but he had four wives and 10 children, with little food or clothing to take care of them. The call to Carson and now the Utah War were proving to be a real test of his faith, but his faith never failed him.

Joseph's journal tells of those hard times. "This was a hard

time. I took care of cattle and sheep for other people, but the winter was so cold and feed so scarce that many animals died. We would gather the dead animals and haul them on a sleigh and drag them into the cabin where we would skin them by the light from the fire. The Indians were also troublesome and had to be watched constantly. Both Elizibeth and Jane had small babies to take care of, so they had their hands full. These were heart-breaking times for the entire family, and only the knowledge that the gospel was true kept us able to endure all the hardships we faced." (20)

Slowly Joseph acquired a few head of livestock of his own and found time to plow and plant some crops. Brigham Young still expected him to keep an eye on the church livestock and he had to take his turn guarding Echo Canyon. He had to work every minute of the day just to survive, but so great was his faith that in later years his son Andrew would say that his father would have cut off his arm if Brigham Young had asked it!

During the winter Joseph got his affairs back in order and was able to take better care of his family. As summer approached and winter snow melted in the high mountains, the Nauvoo Legion was called back to Echo Canyon in strength. An additional 1,000 young boys and old men, the latter called the "Silver-Greys" had been armed and were ready to face Johnston's Army. We know that Joseph was still at home as late as early June, for on June 3rd, 1858 Hosea Stout, his old friend from Nauvoo days and then Attorney General as well as President of the Territorial Legislature recorded in his journal that while enroute to the new state capitol at Fillmore, he had stayed overnight with Joseph at American Fork. (21)

The stalemate between General Johnston's army and the Nauvoo Legion was drawing ever closer to open warfare. Capt. Albert Tracy, Commanding Officer of Co. H, 10th Infantry on April 16th, 1858 reported, "Our scouts report the Mormons are blasting and rolling large rocks into the canyon to stop us, if we ever move." Only a month later he added, "The number of Mormons in battle array in the canyon is said to be about 4,000." (22) Capt. Tracy's statements reflect some doubt that the army would ever advance, while his exaggerated estimate of 4,000 Mormons in the canyon reveals just how effectively the unmanned rifle pits on the heights and the fake cannons along the canyon rim fooled the army scouts, for the Nauvoo Legion's numbers were hardly more than half that reported by Capt. Tracy.

Brigham Young was not only a gifted leader and a shrewd tactician, he was also a skilled politician, and he knew that his rag-tag militia couldn't keep the United States Army out of the territory forever. He realized that he could achieve a victory only through compromise and negotiation. And in Washington President Buchanan was just as anxious to end the fighting, for it was ruining him politically. He also needed General Johnston's troops to fight an Indian war then breaking out in Oregon, and he wasn't unaware that a civil war between the states was fast approaching. The last thing he needed was to have his army stalemated in the Rockies. Both leaders found a way out, Brigham Young through his old friend of Nauvoo days, Col. Thomas Kane, and President Buchanan in the person of Alfred Cumming, probably the only man the Mormons would accept as a governor to replace Brigham Young. But as spring drew near

the obstinate and Mormon hating General Johnston nearly sparked a real shooting war.

Brigham Young made the first peace overture by sending a dispatch to General Johnston that he was sending a wagon load of beef and 20,000 pounds of flour to feed the army troops at Ft. Bridger. But General Johnston refused the offer, saying that "Communication with enemies of the government is prohibited." He then instructed his officers, "When the Mormons are met, they are to be treated as enemies!"⁽²³⁾ Col. Smith of the 10th Infantry stated, "I shall regard the Mormons as enemies and fire upon the scoundrels if they give me the least opportunity!"⁽²⁴⁾

In spite of Governor Young's offers to negotiate, General Johnston continued to prepare for an all out war just as soon as winter's snow melted from the mountains. In September, 1857 Capt. Van Vliet had been allowed to cross the mountains from Ft. Bridger to Salt Lake City, but when he informed Brigham Young that General Johnston intended to establish an army camp in the valley, Young had told him the army would have to fight for it, and then added, "And in the day the valley is won the invaders will find a Utah devasitated of life and habitation, just as the Mormons themselves found it. Every house will be burned to the ground, every tree will be cut down, and every field laid waste. All will be laid in ashes as the army advances. We do not want to fight the United States, but if they drive us to it, we shall do the best we can, and I will tell you, as the Lord lives, we shall come off victorious!"⁽²⁵⁾

Brigham Young knew that congress and the eastern press were

among his best allies, and he made certain that leading New York and Washington newspapers were aware of General Johnston's stubborn refusal to negotiate, and of the harassment and threats Mormons were being subjected to. He let the entire nation know that the Saints were being driven from their homes by as ruthless a mob as those they had fought in Missouri. Many in congress sympathized with Young's position, among them Senator Sam Houston of Texas who described the armies logistical problems. "The army has to be fed, and for 1,600 miles you have to transport provisions. They have already found Ft. Bridger in ashes, and if they ever reach Salt Lake City they will find it in ashes. These people will fight desperately, they are defending their homes. If a war begins it will be the signal for extermination. So sure as the troops advance, they will be annihilated. If you treble the number of troops, you will only add to the catastrophe. These people expect nothing from the troops but extermination and they will oppose them. It would require a force of 50,000 men to maintain and supply an army in Utah, a terrible waste."(26)

When Brigham Young learned for certain that General Johnston intended to invade Utah, he ordered that Salt Lake City and all of the surrounding communities be prepared for evacuation, to be abandoned with only a chosen few to remain behind to burn the cities to the ground should the army enter the valley. In a thundering oration he then told the Saints, "Before I will suffer what I have in times gone by, there will not be one building, nor one foot of lumber, nor a stick, nor a tree, nor a particle of grass or hay that will burn

left in the reach of our enemies. They shall find it as barren as when we came here!"(27)

General Johnston's unyielding position and veiled threats at last gave the Mormons the sympathy of high ranking congressmen and newspaper editors they needed. Almost daily editorials rebuked the Buchanan administration. On June 17th, 1858 the New York Times blasted the administration in Washington. "The latest news from Utah places the Buchanan administration in a position marked by a singular mixture of farce and tragedy, and the whole story is crowded by as much ignorance, stupidity and dishonesty as any government ever managed to get into in a single year. An army was sent to chastise rebels before it was clearly ascertained whether or not there were any rebels to chastise!"(28) Other newspapers called the war Buchanan's Blunder or the "contractor's war", for contractors like Russell, Majors & Waddell who were hauling freight for the army were becoming rich while costing the taxpayers millions. President Buchanan desperately needed a way out and found it in Alfred Cumming and Col. Thomas Kane.

Alfred Cumming, a man who had been Superintendent Of Indian Affairs, was named as Governor of Utah by the President in May, 1857 but had been unable to assume his office because of the hostilities. During the winter he traveled overland to Ft. Bridger where he was given a cool reception, being virtually ignored by General Johnston who wanted no part of any political solution to the war. Meanwhile Col. Kane, with President Buchanan's blessing, traveled as a private citizen by sailing ship to San Francisco and then journeyed overland

to Salt Lake City where he arrived at nearly the same time Governor Cumming reached Ft. Bridger.

Brigham Young agreed to let Col. Kane go through Echo Canyon to meet with Governor Cumming and try to reason with General Johnston. On his arrival at Ft. Bridger, Col. Kane learned that the General would not meet with him, and he also told Governor Cumming that he would not allow him to accompany Col. Kane to Salt Lake City. Defying the General, Col. Kane escorted the new governor over the mountains and through Echo Canyon into the vale of Zion. As they passed through the narrow defile at Echo Canyon during the night, huge bonfires lighted the canyon sides, and Governor Cumming was amazed at the number of Mormon sentries and cannon he thought he saw. On the rocky crags above he couldn't help but see the black barrels of what he thought were cannon, while a solid line of militia lined the canyon rim.

As Col. Kane escorted the Governor through the canyon they were repeatedly challenged by sentries outlined in the firelight above, but they were unaware that as they moved down-canyon the same sentries on the canyon rim would move back out of sight and then hurry ahead to take their place further down-canyon, so that Col. Kane and Governor Cumming were seeing the same sentries over and over again. Governor Cumming was so impressed by what appeared to be heavy gun fortifications and thousands of militiamen that it was said he sent a rider back to Ft. Bridger to tell General Johnston not to bring his army into the canyon until he could come in peace, for the mountains were full of Mormons armed to the teeth!

At the mouth of Echo Canyon Mormon militiamen bearing the national colors met the new Governor, presented arms, saluted and bid him welcome to the Utah Territory. He was escorted through the Weber River Canyon and on to Farmington where he was met by a brass band playing the Star Spangled Banner. At Salt Lake City he was greeted by elected officials and escorted to the governor's office where he was introduced to Brigham Young. He found no rebellion, but a patriotic people willing to accept him as their governor. Contrary to Judge Drummond's lies, he found every court record intact and in order. None of the alleged treason and anarchy described by Judge Drummond existed. But the new Governor couldn't convince Brigham Young to stop the exodus from the valley or the preparations to burn the city. Many were already fleeing southward.

Daniel Jones described the plans to leave Zion. "As soon as the weather moderated in the spring, the people commenced to move south from the northern settlements. Every house at Salt Lake City was abandoned, not a single family remaining. Men were detailed to set fire and burn everything that could be burned. The people really manifested a joy in their moves and no one appeared down-hearted at the sacrifice."(29) Both Joseph and Nymphus helped their mother Sally load the few nice things and family possessions she had into her wagon for the move south. Hers was only one of thousands of wagons strung out along the dusty road to nowhere. Elijah Wilson wrote, "You could sit by the road and see any kind of outfit you might desire, from a wheel-barrow to a fine eight-mule team. An old wagon with a cow and a horse hitched up together was a common

sight. You could see fine buggies drawn by big teams or you could see one old ox hitched between the shafts of a rickety two-wheel cart. You could see women leading the family cow with their bedding and a little food packed on her back. Some were rich but most were poor, but they were all traveling the same road, and all appeared to be happy, and none were afraid."⁽³⁰⁾ Urgent meetings were held daily between Governor Cumming and Brigham Young while couriers raced back and forth between Salt Lake City and Ft. Bridger, all desperately trying to reach a last minute compromise and avoid a shooting war which neither side could win.

Brigham ordered the torchs readied, waiting only the approach of Johnston's Army to put the city in flames. Governor Cumming pleaded with the people not to abandon their homes, but he was told that the Mormons would flee into the desert and mountains, or even to Mexico if need be rather than submit to an army of occupation.⁽³¹⁾ Governor Cumming was so impressed with their zeal and the righteousness of their cause that he agreed to a compromise solution. The army would be allowed to enter the valley but only if they marched straight through and stopped no closer than 40 miles from the city. It was far less than General Johnston wanted but far better than most Mormons had hoped for. Col. Henry Inman perhaps best described the General's defeat and Brigham Young's victory. "In a word, Buchanan and the Washington politicians and the Johnston-Harney army had to confess themselves hopelessly beaten before a blow was struck. The army was powerless before the very people they had come to punish!"⁽³²⁾

In mid-June the army marched through Echo Canyon, meeting not

a single soldier where General Johnston had hoped to find glory on the battlefield. On June 26th, 1858 he led his troops through the silent deserted streets of Salt Lake City. But there was no victory for him. Not a single person greeted him or cheered his troops. The General looked straight ahead, marching quickly through the city of the Saints and observing the peace terms agreed to by Governor Cumming. But Col. Philip St. George Cooke, who had led the starved and half naked Mormon Battalion on its forced march across the southwest deserts to California could not hide his emotion. With tears in his eyes he removed his hat and bared his head in honor of the brave men who had volunteered to fight for their country but who had now been driven from their homes.

General Johnston's Army never broke step, but marched straight through the silent city and across the River Jordan, and continued southward past the Point Of The Mountain and into Cedar Valley, west of Utah Lake, the agreed upon distance from Salt Lake City. The Utah War was over!

Footnotes - Chapter 7

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